

EDITOR'S DESK

In an angry world, kindness begins with us

While I was watching the news events of last week unfold, I was thinking of a song that I grew up singing in church when I was a young child. It went:

"I want to be kind to everyone, for that is right, you see. And so I say to myself, 'Remember this: Kindness begins with me.'"

"Be kind" may seem like an obvious message that no one should need reiterated. But while there are many good and kind people in Hermiston, as someone who has a public-facing and sometimes controversial job I can also tell you from personal experience that there are many people in this community who are not very kind. And they have been particularly unkind this year.

Many unkind people don't think of themselves as such. Occasionally, when I am going through comments on the *Hermiston Herald* or *East Oregonian* Facebook pages to hide or delete ones that violate our community standards against profanity and slurs, I will click on the profile of someone who has said something especially rude. It's amazing how often the person has recently shared a post about the importance of kindness or positivity. One woman had "Be kind, it's that simple" as her slogan at the top of her page.



Jade McDowell
NEWS EDITOR



Jade McDowell/Hermiston Herald

In an example of responding to difficult circumstances with kindness, teenagers wash cars outside Center Market in Stanfield on Saturday, Oct. 3, 2020, to raise money for classmates seriously injured in a recent car crash.

That's the problem with the internet. It creates a psychological barrier between us and the people who we are communicating with. Somehow, calling someone stupid or a liar using a keyboard feels different than walking up to a stranger in the grocery store to call them the same things. But the impact is often the same for the victim, however the message is delivered.

I'm definitely guilty of it, too. Occasionally I have taken my bad day out on a random stranger online,

and if you have ever been the target of a sarcastic or rude comment from me, I sincerely apologize. I am working to improve on that area of my life.

A while ago I saw an interaction between two strangers in the comment section of an article online. They began by disagreeing over something political, which escalated to one person calling the other a name.

While that happens every day, what happened next was more mem-

orable. When the person who had been called a name responded there was no need to get personal, the other commenter apologized, stating he was going through a difficult time in his personal life and he shouldn't have taken that out on someone else. The other responded that he understood; he did the same thing sometimes.

"I hope things get better for you, man," he said, and the two parted ways on seemingly amicable terms.

Imagine if that was the spirit we brought into all of our interactions.

A major part of the human experience is being negatively affected by others. We go through life getting cut off in traffic, given the wrong food order in the drive-thru and treated rudely by customers. What we often don't see is the other side to that interaction — the normally great driver who accidentally cut us off because they were busy worrying about their injured toddler they were rushing to pick up from day care.

Other times, the person we are angry at might be every bit the name we want to call them. We may believe we are completely justified in what we want to say to or about them. In those situations, I have been trying to ask myself one question: With all of negativity already in the world today, do I want to be responsible for making it an even more negative place?

Increasingly, my answer to that question has been no.

COLUMN

Keep your business out of trouble with proper record keeping

What is the difference between bookkeepers, accountants, and certified public accountants (known as CPAs)?

Many times, these terms are used interchangeably by small business owners, but there are distinct and important differences. Sometimes people balk at paying for these professional services, but the investment is well worth avoiding getting sideways with the Internal Revenue Service or Oregon Department of Revenue. Do-it-yourselfers many times make errors especially when it comes to payroll and the timely submission of reports and payments.

This is something the IRS and Oregon Department of Revenue take very seriously, and the penalties are severe.

Here is a brief summary of what duties bookkeepers, accountants, and CPAs typically perform and the requirements of each.

• Bookkeepers work for a company to keep track of the finances. They are responsible for accounts receivable and payable, inventory, accurate and timely recording of transactions, monthly, quarterly, and annual reporting and, in some instances, payroll. They can be independent contractors

or employees. With regard to training, some bookkeepers have only a high school diploma, but many companies prefer someone with at least an associate's degree. Bookkeeping certifications and licensing are available through national organizations. As an aside, bookkeepers are in very high demand and for someone qualified, is it a highly profitable business.

• Accountants typically can prepare detailed financial statements, audits of a company's books, and prepare reports for tax purposes. It is important to note that only CPAs, tax attorneys, and enrolled agents are able to represent a taxpayer to the IRS.

• What can a CPA do? To begin with, they have a much higher level of training and expertise. They have passed required examinations, meet all statutory regulations, and obtained licensing. A CPA can prepare and sign tax returns for businesses and individuals, and represent clients before the IRS for audits and other important matters. The national professional association for CPAs is the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Small business owners are busy. Many lack the expertise or simply don't keep their financial records up to date and are unaware of legitimate and important tax deductions. Depending on the size and type of business, an owner may have a bookkeeper and/or

accountant, and then depend on a CPA for more complex matters, tax planning, and preparation of tax returns.

While it is always best to accurately track income and expenses throughout the year, the beginning of the fourth quarter will allow you a short window of time to get your books in order and implement the services of one or more of these professionals.

Especially with all the unique circumstances surrounding COVID-19, it is highly recommended that business owners employ the services of a CPA. Make the appointment as soon as possible so plans can be made to put the business in the best possible position before 2020 tax returns are due. If delayed, not only will this compromise the business, but this is when CPAs' schedules become full and they may be unable to accept new clients.

The level to which a business owner keeps tabs on the company's finances is a sure recipe for either success or failure.

Make that appointment today.

Greg Smith is the executive advisor for the Umatilla Electric Cooperative Business Resource Center, located at 1475 N. First St. in Hermiston. The center provides free, confidential advising to small businesses and can be reached at 541-289-3000 or uecbrc@gmail.com.



Greg Smith

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Morrow County deserves Doherty

Jim Doherty is in a November runoff to be reelected as county commissioner in Morrow County. I have been watching Jim since meeting him over a year ago, and he will get a vote from me. I encourage everyone registered to vote in Morrow County to vote for him as well. Jim looks at situations from all angles and attempts to steer decisions in a manner that will benefit everyone in the county. Jim works hard advocating for our county in Salem. Jim spends time trying to understand the way things operate and is not afraid to push for improvement even when it is unpopular. This behavior is exactly what we need in our local government.

As a business owner raising my family in Morrow County; I want Jim Doherty working for me as county commissioner. I know that with him in office; someone is thinking of each individual and each entity when making decisions. Jim has been commissioner for one term, and during that time he has developed and adapted. I believe he will only become more effective with time in office.

Please join me in voting to retain Jim Doherty. Morrow County deserves to have Jim Doherty as part of our team.
J. Fletcher Hobbs
Boardman

SPEAK UP

Seeking guest viewpoints

Are you a parent who has been managing your children's distance learning while working from home, struggling to find child care or had to quit your job during the pandemic? The *Hermiston Herald* wants to hear from you about your experience this year. Submit a 250-word letter to the editor or a guest column of 400 to 650 words about your experience, along with your name, city of residence and phone number (phone number is for verification purposes and will not be published) and you may be published on the opinion page of an upcoming edition of the *Hermiston Herald*. Letters and columns can be sent to editor@hermistonherald.com or submitted via the letters form at www.hermistonherald.com.



CORRECTIONS

It is the policy of the *Hermiston Herald* to correct errors as soon as they are discovered. Incorrect information will be corrected on Page 2A. Errors committed on the Opinion page will be corrected on that page. Corrections also are noted in the online versions of our stories.

Please contact the editor at editor@hermistonherald.com or call (541) 564-4533 with issues about this policy or to report errors.

SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters Policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for the *Hermiston Herald* readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters should be kept to 250 words.

No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. The *Hermiston Herald* reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content.

Letters must be original and signed by the writer or writers. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. Only the letter writer's name and city of residence will be published.

OBITUARY POLICY

The *Hermiston Herald* publishes paid obituaries. The obituary can include small photos and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge. Expanded death notices will be published at no charge. These include information about services. Obituaries may be edited for spelling, proper punctuation and style.

Obituaries and notices may be submitted online at hermistonherald.com/obituaryform, by email to obits@hermistonherald.com, by fax to 541-276-8314, placed via the funeral home or in person at the *Hermiston Herald* or *East Oregonian* offices. For more information, call 541-966-0818 or 1-800-522-0255, x221.